

Main Street, Texas: The Road Ahead

I-35 is commonly called Main Street, Texas for a reason; this interstate serves as a major thoroughfare for travelers throughout the state, as a major artery to move goods and freight in Texas and as a route for commuters in cities and suburbs to travel to work and school everyday.

The average daily traffic numbers show how vital I-35 is to the state of Texas. I-35 sees a lot of truck movement, and this movement is important to the Texas economy and communities. According to a Sunset Commission report published prior to the 81st legislative session, the trucking industry pays about \$30 billion each year in wages in Texas and carries 3 million tons of products per day all over the state, including to the 82 percent of Texas communities that depend solely on trucks to receive goods to their area.

Average Annualized Daily Traffic

	Total Traffic	Freight Traffic
Laredo	62,000	7,000
San Antonio	203,000	24,000
Austin	226,000	20,000
Waco	107,000	24,000
Dallas	115,000	27,000
Fort Worth	170,000	17,000

I-35 faces substantial demand – 11 sections of the corridor are on the current list of Texas' 100 most congested roadways. These segments include portions of I-35 through Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth and San Antonio.

I-35 is Unique

Mobility problems on I-35 are different from those found on other parts of the system. Left unaddressed, problems on I-35 have a ripple effect, reaching far beyond the corridor, impacting the entire state. These mobility concerns can result in:

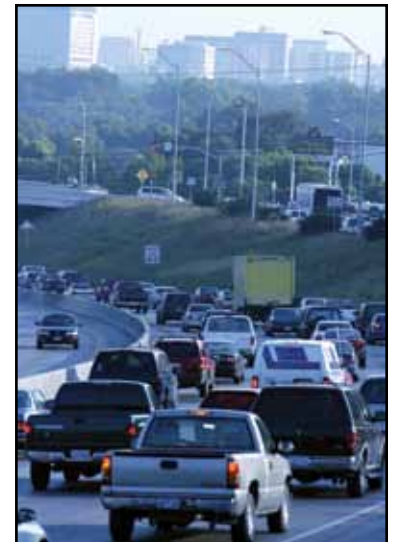
- economic impacts in the form of increased fuel costs, increased costs to get goods to market and lost time at work;
- public health impacts in the form of reduced air quality and reduced safety due to increased traffic accidents; and
- quality of life impacts due to time lost in traffic and the safety risks of motorists traveling at a high rate of speed and suddenly encountering heavy congestion.

Tackling a problem of this size and breadth without coordination is tantamount to treating a serious wound with only a couple of aspirin. By thoughtfully considering steps to improve I-35 against a backdrop of the greater goal to improve the corridor as a whole, Texas will be prepared to take the necessary coordinated steps and deliver a successful outcome.

In 2009 and 2010, the Texas Transportation Commission, in their execution of a comprehensive, multimodal strategy for the entire I-35 system, has supported rail planning, advanced projects using innovative financing tools to provide congestion relief to critical metropolitan sections of I-35, and sponsored citizen committees charged with providing local and regional guidance on the long-term future of the extensive I-35 system.



www.MY35.org

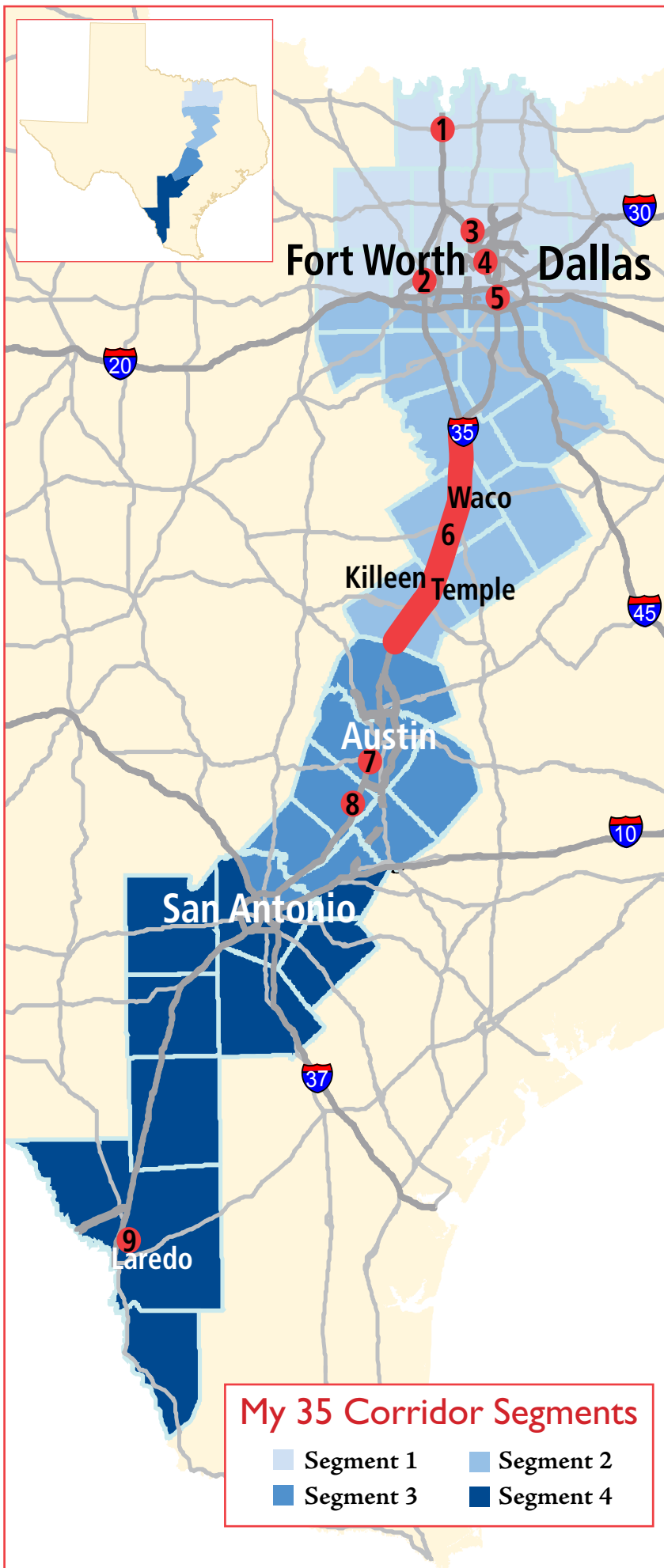


Current and Future Construction Zones

- 1 Construction of overpass at I-35 and U.S. 82 in Gainsville**
Funding Source: ARRA
- 2 Reconstruction and addition of managed lanes on I-35W in Fort Worth**
Funding Source: North Tarrant Express CDA, Proposition 14 bonds
- 3 Reconstruction and expansion of I-35E in Dallas and Denton Counties**
Funding Source: Still in planning stages
- 4 Addition of managed lanes to I-35E south of LBJ**
Funding Source: LBJ Express CDA
- 5 Reconstruction and expansion of I-35E and other bridges near downtown Dallas**
Funding Source: Still in planning stages
- 6 Widening of I-35 to a minimum of six lanes from Williamson County line to the "Y" in Hillsboro**
Funding Source: ARRA, Proposition 14 bonds, Proposition 12 bonds, expansions in Temple and Waco unfunded.
For more information, visit www.my35.org
- 7 Construction of two direct connectors at I-35 and Ben White in Austin**
Funding Source: Proposition 14 bonds
- 8 Construction of frontage roads and overpasses in Hays County**
Funding Source: ARRA and traditional funds
- 9 Interchange construction at Loop 20 and SH 359 and extension of Loop 20 in Laredo**
Funding Source: ARRA, Proposition 14 bonds, Coordinated Border Infrastructure Funds

My 35 Corridor Segments

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Segment 1 |  Segment 2 |
|  Segment 3 |  Segment 4 |



Innovative Financing to Improve Mobility

One aspect of this coordinated approach to addressing mobility concerns on I-35 is the use of innovative financing to add capacity and reconstruct heavily traveled highways in our state's metropolitan areas.

Of the sections that are on the 100 most congested roadways list, I-35E in Dallas County between Loop 12 and I-635 will see substantial improvements under the LBJ Express comprehensive development agreement (CDA). As part of the LBJ Express project, managed lanes will be added to I-35E, adding capacity to the 19th most congested section of roadway in Texas. Direct connections will also be added at the I-35W and I-635 interchange.

I-35W in Tarrant County is part of the North Tarrant Express CDA project, which includes two new managed lanes in each direction and an interchange at the I-820 connection. This section of I-35 is the eighth most congested roadway in the state, so this added capacity is critical.

A third CDA – for SH 130 segments 5 and 6 – will provide an alternative to I-35 from San Antonio through Austin once the final segments open to traffic in 2012.

Keeping Our Promise

In 2009, TxDOT Executive Director Amadeo Saenz announced TxDOT's continuing commitment to finishing I-35 in Central Texas by expanding it to a minimum of six lanes from San Antonio to the "Y" in Hillsboro.

Since that time, the Texas Transportation Commission has allocated funding for nearly all unfunded I-35 expansion projects, using a variety of funding sources, including American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, Proposition 14 bonds and \$1 billion in Proposition 12 bonds. Once the entire expansion is complete in 2015, the department will have invested about \$1.9 billion in state, federal and local funding to not only improve highway mobility through Central Texas, but to reverse some of those negative effects felt statewide due to poor mobility through this heavily traveled section of highway.

While the continued construction on I-35 may cause headaches for motorists in the short term, TxDOT is working with the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to make this stretch of I-35 the "smartest" highway in the state. Using anonymous Bluetooth technology, TTI will help TxDOT measure approximate travel speeds and anticipated travel times, and communicate that real-time information to motorists on the highway using radio stations or electronic message signs. If the system works well, TxDOT may take the effort statewide to help motorists better plan for congested conditions and more accurately estimate travel time.

Rail

Improving our state's network of freight and passenger rail services can also serve to improve mobility on I-35. In October 2010, Texas received \$34 million in TIGER II funding for improvements to Tower 55, a highly congested rail intersection in Fort Worth. These improvements will move freight and passenger traffic through that point more efficiently and could shift some freight from trucks to rails along I-35. Improvements to Tower 55 will begin soon.

Also in October 2010, the Federal Rail Administration awarded TxDOT a \$5.6 million High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail grant to study feasibility and ridership of passenger rail service from Oklahoma City to Dallas/Fort Worth, with a possible extension to Austin, San Antonio and South Texas. It will take some time to complete this study, but once complete, the state will have a much clearer picture of where added passenger rail service may prove beneficial to the state's overall mobility.



Orange Barrels Ahead

A number of additional I-35-related improvement projects are under way or in the planning stages throughout the corridor. For more information on those projects, visit www.txdot.gov, or refer to the map on the opposing page.

Public Involvement for the Future

While numerous construction efforts are under way, the final element of this coordinated strategy to improve I-35 is to engage citizens in long-term, multimodal planning for the I-35 corridor. At the direction of the Transportation Commission, the I-35 Advisory and Segment Committees have developed segment recommendations and a MY 35 Plan outlining the best path forward to improve the I-35 corridor, given the substantial projected growth of these communities in the coming decades.

Members of these committees include representatives of cities, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, chambers of commerce, economic development councils and the Texas Farm Bureau along the I-35 Corridor.

The I-35 Segment and Advisory Committees did not focus solely on highway improvements during this process. Instead, their approach has been multimodal, considering freight and passenger rail solutions as well.

The Segment Committees presented their initial project recommendations to the public in a series of 20 workshops in September 2010. During these workshops, the public had an opportunity to view potential projects as recommended by the Segment Committees, engage in conversation with committee members about their recommendations and provide comments on the projects. This information was also available online for those not able to attend a workshop.

In all, 331 Texans attended workshops and 610 questionnaires were submitted to the Segment Committees. Using feedback from these meetings, the Segment Committees finalized their recommendations, and turned them over to the I-35 Corridor Advisory Committee for compilation into the corridor-wide MY 35 Plan. The MY 35 Plan will be presented to the Texas Transportation Commission in early 2011.

No state has ever attempted such a broad grassroots approach to transportation planning – the citizen-driven MY 35 effort is truly the first and best of its kind in the nation.



Additional Resources

North Tarrant Express – www.northtarrantexpress.com

LBJ Express – www.LBJexpress.com

SH 130 Segments 5 and 6 – www.mySH130.com

I-35 expansion through Central Texas – www.my35.org

Texas Rail Plan – www.txdot.gov, keyword: Rail Plan

MY 35 Citizen Planning Effort – www.my35.org

Additional construction or planning efforts along I-35 – www.my35.org and www.txdot.gov, keyword: Project Tracker

E-mail questions to: AskTxDOT@txdot.gov

